DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 387 430 SO 025 391

AUTHOR Michielsens, Peter
TITLE Secondary Education in the Flemish Community of Belgium.
INSTITUTION Council of Europe, Strasbourg (France).
REPORT NO ISBN-92-871-2643-7
PUB DATE 95
NOTE 43p.; This is one in the series "Guide to Secondary Education in Europe," as part of the project "A Secondary Education for Europe." For related items, see SO 025 387-390. French edition available.
PUB TYPE Reports - Descriptive (141)

EDRS PRICE MF01 Plus Postage. PC Not Available from EDRS.
DESCRIPTORS *Comparative Education; *Cross Cultural Studies; *Educational Assessment; *Educational Planning; Foreign Countries; Foreign Culture; International Education; National Programs; Program Effectiveness; Program Evaluation; Public Policy; *Secondary Education
IDENTIFIERS *Belgium (Flanders); *Flemish People

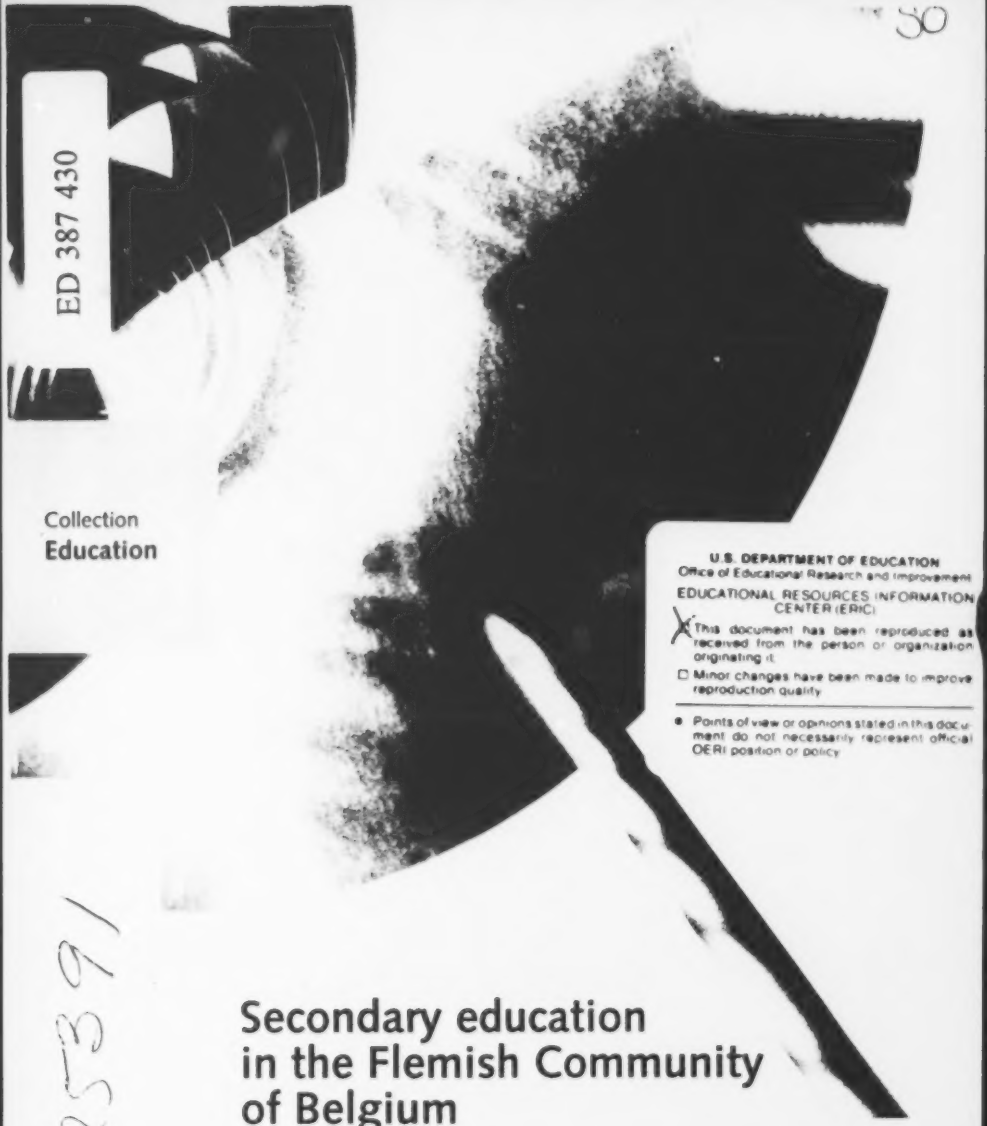
ABSTRACT

This booklet provides a brief description of secondary education in the Flemish Community of Belgium. The publication is part of a series that seeks to make the public aware of the education systems and traditions in all signatory states to the European Cultural Convention and to outline the essential problems these systems presently are facing. This short booklet contains five sections. Part 1, "The Political and Social Context," contains: (1) "Education Structure"; (2) "Legislation"; (3) "General Description of Full-Time Secondary Education"; and (4) "Organisation of Part-time Secondary Education." Part 2, "Issues Section," includes: (1) "Formulation of an Educational Policy and Innovations"; (2) "Financing and the Budget"; (3) "School and Society"; (4) "Administration and Organisation of the Education System and Schools"; (5) "The School as an Organisation and as a Community"; (6) "Syllabuses"; (7) "Assessment"; (8) "The School Staff: Teachers, Heads, and Auxiliary Staff"; and (9) "The European Dimension." Part 3, "Efficiency and Performance of Secondary Education," includes: (1) "Some Particulars of Failure at School"; and (2) "Data on Youth Unemployment." Part 4 examines "Challenges, Problems and Outlook." Part 5 contains an 8-item bibliography. An appendix offers examples of consolidated schedules. (EH)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED 387 430

SO



Collection
Education

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

X This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

Secondary education in the Flemish Community of Belgium

SO 025391

Council of Europe Press

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL IN MICROFICHE ONLY HAS BEEN GRANTED BY
N. Borch-Jacobsen

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Secondary education in the Flemish Community of Belgium

by Peter Michielsens

Guide to secondary education in Europe
Editor Denis Kallen

A secondary education for Europe
Council for Cultural Co-operation

Council of Europe Press, 1995

3

French edition:
L'enseignement secondaire dans la communauté flamende de Belgique
ISBN 92-871-2642-9

The opinions expressed in this work are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the official policy of the Council for Cultural Co-operation of the Council of Europe nor of the Secretariat.

All correspondence concerning this publication or the reproduction or translation of all or part of the document should be addressed to the Director of Education, Culture and Sport of the Council of Europe (F-67075 Strasbourg Cedex).

The reproduction of extracts is authorised, except for commercial purposes, on condition that the source is quoted.

Cover design: Atelier de création graphique, Council of Europe

Publishing and Documentation Service
Council of Europe
F-67075 Strasbourg Cedex

ISBN 92-871-2643-7
© Council of Europe, 1995
Printed in the Netherlands

The **Council of Europe** was founded in 1949 to achieve greater unity between European parliamentary democracies. It is the oldest of the European political institutions and has thirty-four member states,[1] including the fifteen members of the European Union. It is the widest intergovernmental and interparliamentary grouping in Europe, and has its headquarters in the French city of Strasbourg.

Only questions related to national defence are excluded from the Council of Europe's work, and the Organisation has activities in the following areas: democracy, human rights and fundamental freedoms; media and communication; social and economic affairs; education, culture, heritage and sport; youth, health, environment and regional planning; local democracy; and legal co-operation.

The **European Cultural Convention** was opened for signature in 1954. This international treaty is open to European countries that are not members of the Council of Europe, and it enables them to take part in the Organisation's programmes on education, culture, sport and youth. So far, forty-three states have acceded to the European Cultural Convention; the Council of Europe's full member states plus Albania, Belarus, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Croatia, the Holy See, Moldova, Monaco, Russia and Ukraine.

The **Council for Cultural Co-operation** (the CDCC) is responsible for the Council of Europe's work on education and culture. Four specialised committees – the Education Committee, the Standing Conference on University Problems, the Culture Committee and the Cultural Heritage Committee – help the CDCC to carry out its tasks under the European Cultural Convention. There is also a close working relationship between the CDCC and the regular conferences of specialised European ministers responsible for education, culture and cultural heritage.

The CDCC's programmes are an integral part of the Council of Europe's work, and, like the programmes in other sectors, they contribute to the Organisation's three overarching policy objectives for the 1990s:

– the protection, reinforcement and promotion of human rights and fundamental freedoms and pluralist democracy;

– the promotion of an awareness of European identity;

1. Andorra, Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Cyprus, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, San Marino, Slovak Republic, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Turkey, United Kingdom.

– the search for common responses to the great challenges facing European society.

The CDCC's education programme covers school, higher and adult education, as well as educational research. At present, its main priorities are projects on: the European dimension of secondary education; university co-operation; adult education and social change; modern languages; and the pooling of the results of educational research.

In 1991, the Council for Cultural Co-operation of the Council of Europe launched a project entitled "A secondary education for Europe". The aims of the project are to:

– give young people the knowledge, skills and attitudes they will need to meet the major challenges of European society;

– prepare young people for higher education, and for mobility, work and daily life in a multilingual and multicultural, democratic Europe;

– make young people aware of their common cultural heritage and their shared responsibilities as Europeans.

This project has two elements: the first devoted to reflections and consultations among the member states on the overall policies and strategies, and the second on the European dimension in the school curriculum.

The series entitled "Guide to secondary education in Europe" sets out to present in a synthetic form – country by country – the major elements of secondary education structures and policies that exist in CDCC member states.

Each guide has been written, on the basis of a common analysis, by experts designated by the authorities in each country concerned.

Denis Kallen has undertaken the difficult task of the general co-ordination of this series, guaranteeing its coherence and thus allowing comparisons to be made among countries.

Given that this is a field in which developments sometimes take place very quickly and are of an almost permanent nature, it is possible that, despite the considerable efforts made to take into account the latest reforms in the pipeline, certain changes may have taken place since the manuscript was originally received.

Available shortly in the same series

– *Secondary education in France*
ISBN 92-871-2578-3

– *Secondary education in Ireland*
ISBN 92-871-2580-5

– *Secondary education in Liechtenstein*
ISBN 92-871-2584-8

– *Secondary education in the Netherlands*
ISBN 92-871-2582-1

– *Secondary education in Slovenia*
ISBN 92-871-2555-4

– *Secondary education in England*
ISBN 92-871-2645-3

– *Secondary education in Austria*
ISBN 92-871-2639-9

– *Secondary education in Germany*
ISBN 92-871-2637-2

– *Secondary education in Switzerland*
ISBN 92-871-2641-0

Contents

Page

I. The political and social context 9

1. Education structure 9
2. Legislation 10
3. General description of full-time secondary education 12
4. Organisation of part-time secondary education 16

II. Issues section 19

1. Formulation of an educational policy and innovations 19
2. Financing and the budget 23
3. School and society 25
4. Administration and organisation of the education system and schools 27
5. The school as an organisation and as a community 30
6. Syllabuses 30
7. Assessment 31
8. The school staff: teachers, heads and auxiliary staff 32
9. The European dimension 34

III. Efficiency and performance of secondary education 37

1. Some particulars of failure at school 37
2. Data on youth unemployment 38

IV. Challenges, problems and outlook 41

Bibliography 43

Annexe – Examples of consolidated schedules 45

I. The political and social context

In order to understand the educational system in Flanders, it is necessary to know something about the recent reform of the Belgian Constitution.

In 1988, the Belgian Parliament adopted a radical reform that gave regional authorities greater influence over social, cultural and economic life. Under the Constitution, the community councils[1] and executives have legislative powers in educational matters. The Flemish Community has had the financial resources to manage its own affairs since January 1989.

1. Education structure

Some of the first steps taken by the Flemish Community to give effect to regional autonomy concerned the provision of education. These measures form part of a long Belgian tradition of freedom of education, which is the keystone of the system.

In Belgium, everyone is free to open a school. In the past, most schools were run by three large networks: the state itself, communes and provinces, and religious authorities, especially the Catholic Church.

Parents are free to choose a school. Moreover, enrolment is not necessarily dependent on local provision, although normally one ought to be able to find an acceptable school in one's region. The large number of schools in Flanders is one of the consequences of this freedom of choice.

State schools must accept all pupils who apply, whereas the others may demand that parents subscribe to their educational strategy. The state finances its own schools and subsidises the others in order to make education accessible to all. These subsidies take the form of the payment of salaries and the provision of funds to help pay for the running of schools (including the maintenance of buildings, equipment and materials for classes and workshops, contribution towards building costs, etc.).

1. The Constitution mentions "Flemish Council", which is in reality the Assembly of the Flemish parliamentarians. In this document we will use, for the sake of clarity, the term "Flemish Parliament" when talking about the Flemish Council.

After the constitutional reform, one of the Flemish Community's first moves was to make the schools it ran self-governing. To this end, the Decree of 5 December 1988 initially made an independent council (ARGO)[1] responsible for governing community schools up until April 1991. This was, however, merely a transitional phase, as the Decree of 1988 transferred certain powers (for example, staff recruitment) to local bodies (namely, the local educational boards of the Flemish Community) as from April 1991. These local boards are elected by staff, parents and pupils who have come of age. Since their election, these boards have co-opted representatives from the business world. The community's educational reform has clearly strengthened the public authorities' independence in this sector. In the past, ministers both organised and supervised state education. They also subsidised and supervised schools run by other bodies. Today they are independent *vis-à-vis* all schools. Schools are now treated in the same way irrespective of whether they are state-run or private.

This independence has enabled the Flemish Executive to reorganise education. Several of the measures it has taken, such as the reform of secondary and university education, the setting-up of an inspectorate to supervise all schools, etc., have directly influenced the quality of education.

At present, ARGO organises the state education for the Flemish Community, alongside the provinces and communes, which also provide a sort of non-denominational education. These two networks are not, however, as large as the third: the private or "free" sector.

Although in Flanders some schools apply the principles of Rudolf Steiner, while others are run by the Jewish religious authorities, most private schools are Catholic. Since 1959, these schools have been subsidised (salaries and funds). They do not enjoy any privileges compared with non-denominational schools, but have a reputation for high standards. That is why most parents choose to send their children to a Catholic school, although the days when Flanders was Catholic and clerical belong to the past.

2. Legislation

Having given providers more independence, the Flemish Community endeavoured, between 1990 and 1992, to adapt previous national legislation on education. Within a relatively short time, the Flemish Parliament passed a whole series of decrees to replace the previous (out-of-date) laws covering the whole of Belgium.

1. ARGO: Autonome Raad voor het Gemeenschapsonderwijs – Independent Council for Community Education. These schools are run by this council.

Table 1: Breakdown of pupils in the three networks, 1992/93

	ARCO	"Neutral"[1]	Private[2]	Total
Nursery schools	12.83%	18.30%	68.88%	214 407
Primary schools	13.42%	22.06%	64.52%	401 066
Secondary schools	16.51%	8.61%	74.87%	432 940

1. Schools run by the communes and provinces
2. Schools that are privately run but subsidised by the community. 99% of them are Catholic schools

Table 2: Changes in student numbers in the three different types of secondary education networks during the period between 1958/59 and 1992/93

School year	ARCO	"Neutral"	Private	Total
1958/59	20.19%	8.77%	71.04%	217 416
1962/63	19.76%	8.01%	72.23%	296 700
1966/67	19.86%	8.27%	71.87%	361 021
1970/71	20.24%	8.86%	70.90%	418 382
1974/75	20.31%	8.79%	70.90%	460 194
1978/79	19.78%	8.62%	71.60%	492 960
1982/83	20.34%	8.89%	70.77%	481 032
1986/87	18.23%	9.16%	72.61%	459 915
1990/91	16.61%	8.42%	74.97%	426 325
1992/93	16.51%	8.61%	74.87%	432 940

This considerable legislative task is not quite finished. The new Minister for Education, appointed after the elections on 24 November 1991, is continuing with it. Some important decisions about secondary education had already been taken. The Order of the Flemish Parliament of 5 April 1989 paved the way for the Decree of 31 July 1990, which laid the legal foundations for secondary education. A new "unitary" system put an end to an ambiguous situation in which secondary education could be organised in accordance with an Act of 1957 (traditional education) or an Act of 1971 (reformed education).

Further orders have come into force that extend this new unitary system. Those concerning practical arrangements and staff were innovatory, and new rules have been introduced on investment in buildings and basic equipment, and on teachers' qualifications. The conditions on which teachers are recruited

and employed have been greatly simplified and depend on the number of pupils. Lastly, quality-control bodies have been set up by the public authorities. A new concept of quality control led to the appointment of a strictly independent inspectorate supported by a technical advisory service, the Dienst voor Onderwijsontwikkeling (DVO) (Service for the Development of Education). At the same time, providers have been allowed to set up their own outside advisory services with a view to improving quality.

3. General description of full-time[1] secondary education

During the last few decades, secondary education in Flanders has been polarised by the debate between advocates of a more differentiated form of education and proponents of a more comprehensive pattern. These discussions reached a climax in the second half of the 1980s, against a backdrop of difficulties in filling places at schools. The fall in the birth-rate coupled with the freedom to choose schools meant that a *de facto* assessment of the two types of schooling was reflected by the extent to which the effect of the falling birthrate was felt in school enrolments.

This situation is illustrated by the following table:

Table 3: Number of pupils and schools in secondary comprehensive and differentiated schools

School year 1988/89	Number of pupils	Number of schools
Comprehensive education	159 059	339 + 86[1]
Differentiated education	166 596	260

1. These are schools moving from a differentiated to a comprehensive system.

These figures refer only to private education, which alone accounted for a total 73,70% of the school population. Moreover, the problem did not arise in the other networks, as all state education at that time (17,33% of the secondary school population) and almost all subsidised education (8,96%) was organised along comprehensive lines.

1. The Decree of 31 July 1990, in Article 46, defines full-time secondary education as "the instruction received by a normal pupil over a period of forty weeks in the year at the rate of at least twenty-eight periods a week, but taking into account the maximum number of weekly periods laid down in articles ...". A normal pupil in his first year of secondary education is one who has completed six years of primary education.

In 1989, the federalisation of education (Flanders could now decide its own educational policy) finally settled the question. The Decree of 31 July 1991 replaced the choice between the two alternative forms of education with a "unitary system" at secondary level, within which schools have a wide margin of discretion in the way curricula are taught.

This reform is based on the following principles:

– the community determines the overall framework for secondary education. In other words, the community takes account of the identity (or philosophy) of the authority running the school which, while respecting the basic rules, is relatively free to organise instruction as it thinks fit;

– the basic rules state that secondary education must comprise three stages each lasting two years. During the first stage, the focus is on basic training. The decree stipulates that, in the first year, twenty-seven of the thirty-two hours of weekly instruction must be devoted to this basic training and outlines a syllabus of core subjects (for example, mother tongue, history, mathematics, etc.). The decree is not concerned with the timetable, which schools are free to set themselves;

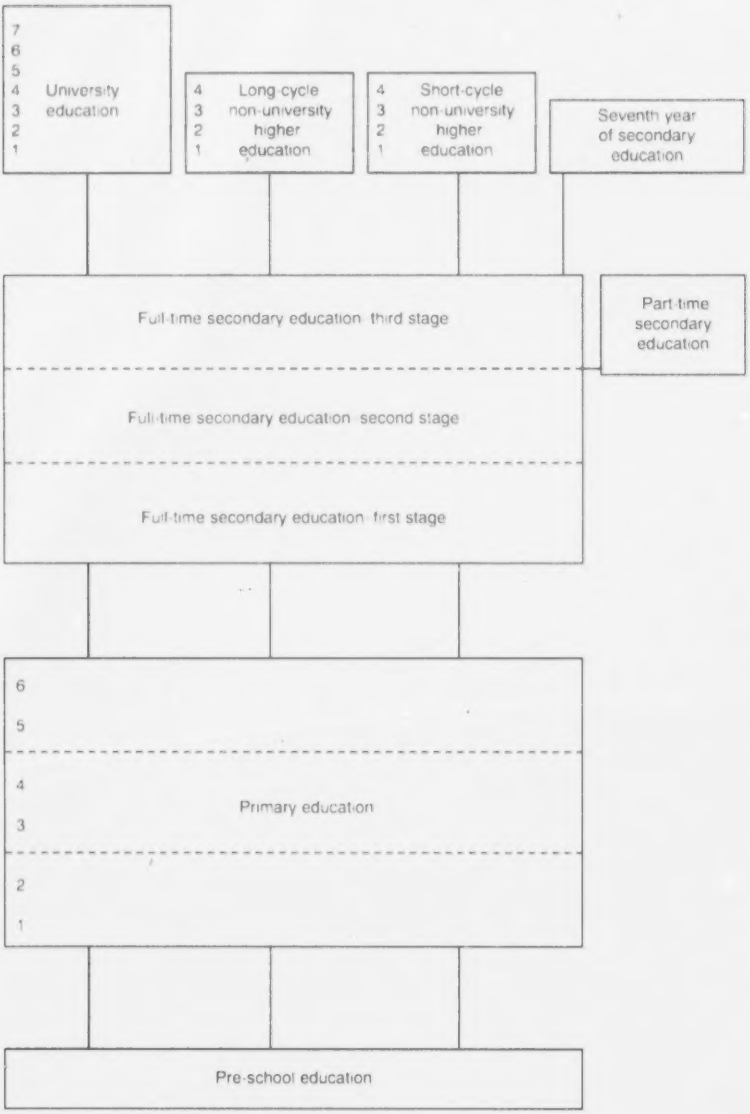
– some broad categories are specified as from the second stage: namely, general, technical, vocational and artistic education. The decree says nothing about subjects or the time to be spent on these types of instruction;

– the Flemish Executive and minister responsible have put the finishing touches by stipulating the subjects that can be taught, establishing standard timetables for each option (in order to ensure pupil mobility), standardising the various options, etc.;

– there is ample freedom for schools to create a distinctive image within this single framework. Although the broad lines of curricula are laid down by the public authorities, schools may themselves decide on their syllabus and exact timetable. For example, in the second year of the first stage, a ministerial order makes provision for a standard timetable of twenty-four hours. This means that a school is free to supplement this timetable by adding eight hours of subjects it considers useful.

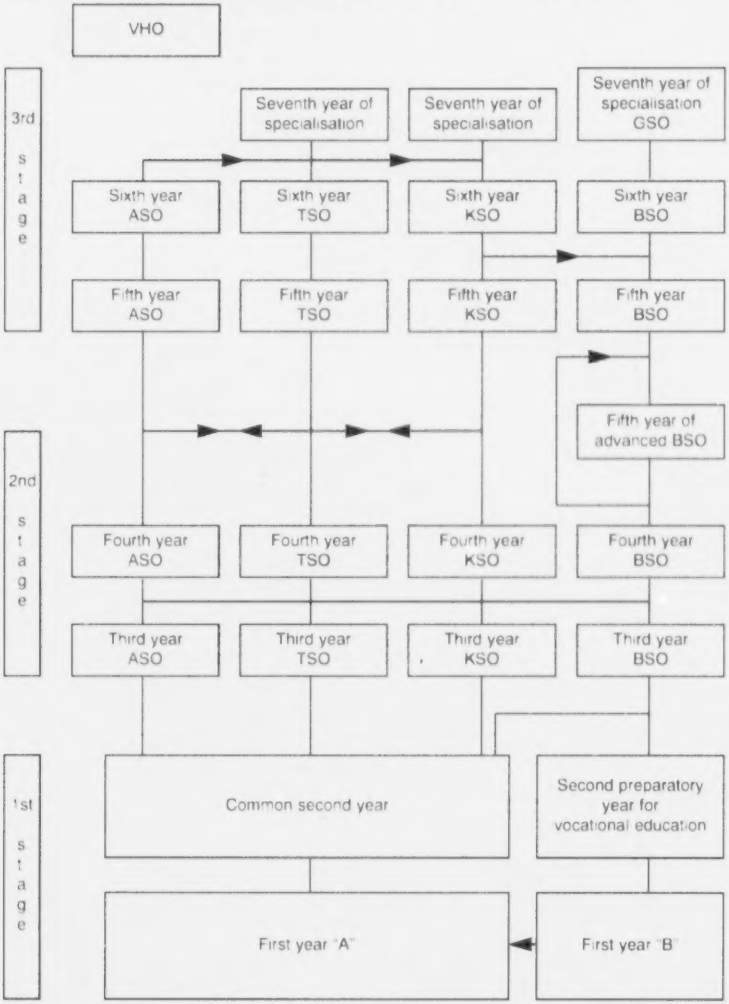
It may be concluded that, as far as secondary education is concerned, the public authorities have tried to arrive at a compromise between a completely free system and a centralised, monolithic one. The main aim of the compromise is to respect providers' independence on the one hand, and to introduce a degree of uniformity, on the other, so as to ensure the equal treatment of all pupils (with regard to their studies) and all schools (with regard to the funds the community wishes to invest in education).

Figure 1: Organisation of the Flemish education system



14

Figure 2: Organisation of secondary education – unitary system



ASO General secondary education
TSO Technical secondary education
KSO Artistic secondary education
BSO Vocational secondary education
VHO Preparatory year for higher education
GSO Seventh year in vocational secondary education, leading to Diploma in Secondary Studies

4. Organisation of part-time secondary education

In Belgium, education is compulsory, but school attendance is not necessarily obligatory. Instruction at home may suffice in some circumstances.

The Act of 30 June 1983 extended compulsory secondary education to the age of 16, something that had been talked about ever since 1973:

- compulsory education begins after the summer holidays in the year in which the child turns 6 and continues until the age of 18;

- full-time compulsory education (at least twenty-eight hours of tuition per week, forty weeks a year) lasts:
  - until the age of 15 if the two first years of secondary education have been completed; or
  - until the age of 16 if this is not the case;
- after this, part-time education is compulsory.

The authors of the legislation obviously had to specify the terms and conditions for compulsory schooling up to 18 and find a new formula for secondary education to supplement that which already existed. Thus a shorter timetable was initially introduced on an experimental basis.

A young person who has completed compulsory schooling may:

- either continue full-time secondary studies; or

- opt for the experimental programme of secondary education, comprising lower or higher vocational studies with a shorter weekly timetable.

The shorter timetable was introduced experimentally by the Royal Decree of 16 July 1984 and the requisite corrections to it were made in the Royal Decree of 12 December. This experimental programme is offered at forty-eight centres, twenty-four of which are run by the community and twenty-four by the private, subsidised sector. It consists of forty weeks of study comprising fifteen fifty-minute periods of instruction per week (eight vocational and seven general education) and may be combined with:

- a part-time job;

- a part-time traineeship;

- a sandwich course (240 periods of instruction per year for 16-year-olds and 360 for 15-year-olds).

Sandwich courses are arranged by the Ministry of Education with the assistance of industry and the support of the European Social Fund. The Institutes for the Continuing Vocational Training of Small Traders and Businessmen, assisted by small and medium-sized firms, also organise sandwich courses.

The Act of 19 July 1983, as amended by that of 24 July 1987, lays down the rules for apprenticeships. The aim is to impart general social and economic skills to apprentices and teach them the necessary vocational skills. The additional theoretical training and socioeconomic education may be delegated to the centres offering part-time courses.

This part-time vocational education was given a legal basis by the Decree of 31 July 1991 (see section 3 of this chapter), which confirmed the existing experimental arrangements. It must be pointed out that this type of education leads to a qualification equivalent to that issued at the end of full-time vocational studies.

II. Issues section

1. Formulation of an educational policy and innovations

The constitutional reform of 15 July 1988 transferred virtually all powers in educational matters to the communities. The Flemish Community was therefore made responsible for education in the Dutch language.

Depending on the level concerned, decisions are based on ministerial orders, orders of the Flemish Executive (namely, the Flemish Government) or decrees (adopted by the Flemish Parliament).

There are three educational matters that cannot be settled by the community and are still the concern of the Federal Government (Constitution, Article 59 *bis*, Section 2):

"a. the determination of the beginning and the end of obligatory school attendance;
b. minimum conditions for the award of diplomas;
c. the pension system."

Within the Flemish Executive, responsibility for education lies with the Minister of Education. Other ministers have limited powers in educational matters: the Minister of Labour, as the Vlaamse Dienst voor arbeidsbemiddeling (Flemish Employment Service) provides training, and similarly the Minister for Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises.

When arriving at decisions, the public authorities must respect some basic rules, as is right and proper in our system of consultative democracy. All orders and decrees pertaining to the organisation of education must therefore be submitted for opinion to the providers, represented by the following associations: ARGO for community schools, CVPO for schools run by the provinces, OVSG for communal schools and NVKSO for private Catholic schools.

When these orders and decrees concern staff, they must be negotiated with the recognised trade unions: the Socialist Trade Union Organisation, the

Christian Group of Teachers' Trade Unions and the Liberal Group of Teachers' Trade Unions.

Under the Decree of 31 July 1991, the Vlaamse Onderwijsraad (VLOR) (Flemish Board of Education) (see below) must also be consulted. When a decree is to be issued, the SERV, Sociaal-Economische Raad voor Vlaanderen (Socioeconomic Council for Flanders) is likewise invited to take part in the talks.

Lastly, it must be pointed out that, in principle, all orders and decrees must be submitted for opinion to the Council of State (unless urgent procedure is involved) and, for approval, to the Minister for the Budget.

The role of the Flemish Parliament is extensive in some respects and limited in others. The Flemish Parliament can influence the broad lines of educational policy. Since education was federalised, the legislative power of the minister and Flemish Executive has been weakened in favour of that of the Flemish Parliament. All political decisions need to be based on a law (the situation before the constitutional reform of 1988) or decree (as from 1988). This has led to a number of decrees designed to give a new legal basis to wide areas of education and to correct some anomalies.

Nevertheless, the time-consuming procedures accompanying the drafting of a decree restrict the role of the Flemish Parliament compared with that of business (SERV) and educational (VLOR) circles. Obviously, deputies do not amend a draft decree unless it is really necessary.

The inspectorate's report on the situation in schools is a completely new departure in Belgian, or rather Flemish, educational policy. The new decree on the inspectorate and the advisory services lays down that the inspectorate must draw up an annual report on the situation in schools and submit it to the Flemish Parliament. This had never been done under previous Belgian educational policy. The report must enable Flemish deputies to gauge the effects of their legislation on education. At the same time, it provides an opportunity to discuss any particular problems noted by the inspectors.

Will the Flemish Parliament accept this inbuilt invitation to initiate an annual debate within society about education? As this new tool only became available in the autumn of 1992, it is still to early to answer this question.

The Flemish Parliament plays a more symbolic role in setting educational targets. The above-mentioned decree on the inspectorate and advisory services makes provision for the effective application of "final goals", that is to say the minimum objectives that society is entitled to expect from each level of education, including knowledge, attitudes and skills. These minimum objec-

tives or final goals must be formulated and prepared by the Dienst voor Onderwijsontwikkeling (DVO). They will be submitted to the Flemish Parliament by the executive after the VLOR has expressed an opinion. It must, however, be stressed that neither the parliament nor the executive is entitled to formulate the final goals or alter those proposed. If the executive or parliament wish to reject the final goals proposed, the whole procedure will have to be repeated. It is clear that the legislator wished in the decree to guard against the politicisation of curricula. In order to permit the updating of these goals, the decree authorises their partial ratification by the Flemish Executive, thus avoiding the long and tedious procedure of passage through the Flemish Parliament. If these goals refer to a specific area of education (for example, vocational training) they may be ratified (and therefore modified) by the Flemish Executive acting, of course, on a proposal of the DVO and having obtained the opinion of the VLOR.

In order to enable educationalists to participate more closely in the formulation of educational policy at community level, the Decree of 31 July 1991 provides for the establishment of a central consultative board, the Vlaamse Onderwijsraad (VLOR). This board not only has a central council, but also separate councils for each type of education (higher, secondary, special, basic, adult, etc.). In addition, some sections have been given more detailed duties; for example, the council on secondary education has one section on general education, another on artistic education and yet another on technical and vocational education. Lastly, a council can instruct a working party or committee to deal with a particular subject temporarily.

The general board and its councils are made up of representatives of providers, trade unions or professional associations and business circles, plus a representative of the government and a member of the inspectorate, as well as specialists (generally members of education faculties).

The same concern to involve the population more closely in school affairs forms the basis of bodies set up at local level. Here, a distinction must be drawn between community schools and subsidised schools (run by towns, communes, provinces and the Catholic Church).

In the case of community schools, provision has been made for a Lokale Raad voor het Gemeenschapsonderwijs or LORGO (Local Board for Community Schools), which often takes full responsibility for the running of these schools. The LORGO consists of democratically elected representatives of staff and parents and, possibly, of pupils who have come of age. The elected members also co-opt people from the business world.

The situation is quite different in the subsidised sector, as the running of these schools (and the attendant responsibility) rests on the application of the principle of freedom to provide education. Towns and communes (the town council being the highest authority here) and provinces (where the provincial council constitutes the highest authority) do, therefore, provide education. Nevertheless, half of the schools are run on a private basis by Catholic, non-profit making associations organised by bishoprics, religious orders, congregations or joint church and lay institutions. As the ultimate rationale for this subsidised education lies in bodies that have a different legal structure, educational circles are less closely involved in the running of these schools than they are in the management of community schools.

In the decree, the legislator has given these institutions joint boards that have consultative and informative functions. These boards are made up of equal numbers of democratically elected representatives of parents (and possibly pupils who have come of age) and staff. Representatives of the business world may likewise be co-opted.

Research

The Flemish Community has recently (July 1991) set up its own scientific advisory service, the Dienst voor Onderwijsontwikkeling (see above). The DVO is primarily responsible for setting final goals, but it will also have to devise the tools for assessing their attainment and suggesting syllabuses. Furthermore, this service may employ temporary staff to plan and prepare the visits to be carried out by community inspectors. As this service is new, it is impossible to present any tangible results.

In order to lay the foundations for their educational policy, the public authorities may call on the scientific research being done at Flemish universities. Much research has already been done on secondary education, especially with regard to staff motivation and the way teachers use classroom time.

Lastly, the Ministry of Education has recently made strenuous efforts to expand the statistical and information services and speed up their operations. These endeavours are part of a much wider scheme under which an external audit office set out to study and reorganise the whole of the Flemish civil service. One of the major changes introduced here is certainly the new method of personnel management, which, as it is more efficient, has silenced criticism from teachers and soothed their anxiety.

2. Financing and the budget

Budget

The total budget for secondary education in 1992 came to 876 165 000 Belgian francs.

Table 5: Secondary education budget as a percentage of the community education budget and of the total community budget (1992)

Secondary education budget	% of education budget	% of total community budget
876 165 000 BF	42%	20.2%

These figures do not include expenditure on school buildings. They cover only staff salaries and operating costs.

These sums may be divided by the number of pupils and expressed as a cost per pupil. This gives the following picture (data calculated for 1990):

Table 6: Cost per pupil and per student in Belgian francs (1990)

Cost per primary school pupil	98 339
Cost per secondary school pupil	212 442
Cost per student in (non-university) higher education	171 789

Salary costs

Teachers' salary costs are chiefly determined by three criteria: first the organisation of classes according to a pupil coefficient; secondly, the number of hours teachers have to work; and, thirdly, teachers' pay scales, which vary according to qualifications.

The organisation of classes in secondary education depends on the number of hours to which the school is entitled, this being decided by the number of pupils. To this end, the number of pupils is multiplied by a predetermined pupil coefficient, which varies according to the type of education and the courses given. The school is free to devote the total number of hours produced by the application of the pupil coefficient to the holding of normal classes, remedial classes or other specific teaching duties. The direct consequence of this freedom is that the school is responsible for deciding on the

size of classes. It can therefore give favourable treatment to some years and/or courses by organising smaller classes.

A school may recruit and employ staff on the strength of this organisational pattern. In doing so, it must observe the following basic rules:

– in the first stage of secondary education, for general and technical subjects, it must (in principle) employ *agrégés pour l'enseignement secondaire inférieur*, namely, persons who are qualified to teach lower secondary school classes (they must have received three years' higher-level teacher training); a full workload comprises twenty-two hours of teaching or similar duties;

– in the second stage of secondary education, the school may decide whether to employ a person qualified to teach in lower secondary education or a person qualified to teach in higher secondary education (university degree plus a teaching diploma for secondary education); at this level, a full workload consists of twenty-one hours of teaching or similar duties;

– in the third stage, general courses are taught by *licenciés-agrégés* (qualified graduate teachers) whose full workload consists of twenty or more hours per week;

– the standards applying to teachers of practical courses are similar, save that a full workload comprises twenty-two hours in the first stage and thirty in the second and third stages.

Teachers' wages are linked to their initial training. There is no difference in pay depending on the stage they teach. Remuneration varies according to the teacher's qualifications (*licencié agrége, agrégé pour l'enseignement secondaire supérieur* or *agrégé pour l'enseignement secondaire inférieur*). Salaries are paid by central government. Schools do not therefore receive the funds to pay their staff.

Schools may hire their own staff to maintain buildings. No particular rules are attached to their terms of employment, which are therefore completely discretionary. Schools themselves pay these members of staff from the funds they are allocated to cover operating costs.

Operating funds

The operating funds allocated to schools are calculated on the basis of pupil numbers, using a coefficient that varies according to the section each pupil is in. For example, the coefficient of a pupil in an industrial section is higher than that of a pupil in general secondary education. The appropriation a school receives to cover its operating costs is therefore the product of multiplying the number of pupils by their individual coefficients.

Schools are free to use these funds as they wish, provided it is for educational purposes. This means that all expenditure on the maintenance of buildings, heating and lighting, the purchase of teaching aids, any in-service further training courses, audiovisual equipment, etc., must be paid for out of this appropriation.

A special arrangement governs the financing of major structural work and initial fitting-out. Community schools (ARGO) are financed directly by the community and are not subsidised. The public authorities award grants towards the construction and initial fitting-out of subsidised schools. Under current rules, the public authorities contribute up to 60%. The remaining 40% (plus VAT) must be self-financed (for example, by a loan).

Tuition costs

Secondary schooling is compulsory. This means that it is free, at least in theory. In fact, this applies to tuition. No enrolment fees may be charged. In most schools, however, pupils have to pay for the purchase or hire of textbooks. Boarding costs (school canteen, etc.) must also be borne by pupils.

3. School and society

Relations with trade and industry

There are not many links between schools and the world of enterprises.[1] As mentioned earlier, some schemes seek to improve relations by involving businessmen in education. Business circles must be represented on the Flemish Board of Education, the local boards of community schools and joint boards of subsidised schools.

Several years ago, regional committees were set up on which the Ministers of Labour and Education served. It must be admitted that the results differed from one region to another. In order to make these committees more efficient, they now have one inspector per province, whose job it is to improve relations between businesses and schools. The inspector's independence and rank ought to contribute to the success of this initiative.

Society's expectations of education

In this respect, it cannot be denied that in Flanders the general tendency is to expect too much. Eyes almost always turn towards education when current social ills have to be tackled. Traffic problems, anti-drug measures, environ-

1 Although there are not a great number of official initiatives, several schools have taken it upon themselves to make contacts: they have concluded agreements with certain industries to organise, for example, centres where schools can give more specialised lessons.

mental and health education, teaching children how to handle emotions and relationships, etc., all mean that schools are assailed with requests for interdisciplinary measures.

Yet the public authorities have never given a lead here. They express their moral support for such projects, but recommending them to schools is all the commitment they are prepared to show.

The public authorities have done more to promote sport at school by permitting one whole day each year to be given over to sporting activities ever since 1980. Moreover, funds have been available for many years to finance school sports clubs. In other fields, action is more discreet. Some projects may receive a small, temporary financial contribution.

Schemes to assist immigrants

Since 1991, the Flemish Executive has made additional funds available to back educational projects aimed at the immigrant population, especially that from the Maghreb. Secondary schools that launch such a project are allotted more class time and teaching support, one of the conditions being that the school must undertake to associate local bodies concerned with immigrants in the organisation of such schemes.

Similarly, in the context of integration policy, steps have been taken since 1991 to promote the speedy acclimatisation of refugees to our educational system. The main aim is to enable these children to become rapidly proficient in their mother tongue. To this end, five schools per network (one per province) are being offered the possibility of devising a special timetable to meet the needs of this particular group.

The role of parents

In recent years, parents have come to play a more important role, especially in secondary education, where they are represented on all the various educational boards: at community level on the VLOR, at local level on the LORGO or joint boards.

This legal situation marks a pause in a development that started some years ago. Since the beginning of the 1980s, the two big parents' federations (the one mainly comprising parents of children in state education and the other, exclusively consisting of parents with children at private Catholic schools) have become more and more closely associated with negotiations concerning education. The decree on participation in subsidised education (joint boards) came into being as a result of pressure from the parents' confederation.

While parents have every opportunity to participate in community education (they are democratically elected to the LORGO where they can decisively influence all decisions concerning local education policy), it must be admitted that their role in subsidised education is more discreet. Like teachers, they merely have a right to be informed and consulted. The power to take decisions still rests with the authority running the school.

4. Administration and organisation of the education system and schools

The unitary structure was outlined in the first section. It only remains to add some additional information and look at some prospects for the future.

Standardisation of the names of options and subjects

Before 1989, there were more than 500 different options in secondary education. Especially in technical and vocational education, schools excelled in the art of creating an option that was scarcely any different from another already existing subject as a way of attracting pupils. In order to make the options on offer more intelligible and more manageable, the public authorities drastically reduced the number of names.

The various subjects were listed and simplified. The advantage of this reform is that it considerably enhances pupil mobility (they can change schools more easily) and facilitates more coherent management by the public authorities.

The pedagogical objective seems to have been achieved: general culture is taught in all types of secondary education (general, technical and vocational), reflecting the wish of the Flemish Community to prevent premature specialisation.

Financing of schools and a more flexible procedure as regards the syllabus

The introduction of the new structure was accompanied by a new procedure for calculating schools' financial resources (see Order of the Flemish Executive of 31 July 1990).

In this context, the criteria governing the syllabus were eliminated. As the school has its own budget, it is free to decide if it wishes to invest in a new option. To make things easier, the reference date on which the budget is decided is 1 February of the previous school year. As schools enjoy greater independence, their management can only be easier and more efficient.

Rights of pupils and students

In recent years it has been obvious that the consumers of education have become liberated. The decisions taken by schools have frequently been challenged in court. It is true that in the Belgian system there was practically no protection of pupils' rights. Legislative steps have been taken to remedy the situation.

In secondary education, schools must agree with parents or pupils who have come of age on the school's disciplinary regulations and rules governing studies. By enroling at a school, the pupil (or their parents) are considered to have given their consent to the existing procedures. In any case, all schools must have an appeal body. A kind of contract therefore exists between schools and parents, which both parties promise to respect. The substance of this contract is determined by the school; only the form has been prescribed by legislation.

Certificates and diplomas in secondary education

Every pupil who has obtained a certificate of basic education may go on to secondary education. Some pupils may be accepted without this certificate, which they will then be awarded at the end of the first year.

At the end of each school year pupils are assessed and marked by a staff meeting, a panel consisting of the teachers of the pupil in question.

The pupil may move up to the next year without any restrictions ("A" certificate), or move up to the next year, but only for certain, clearly defined sections ("B" certificate) or may be required to repeat a year ("C" certificate).

On successful completion of the first and second stages, pupils receive a first-stage certificate. At the end of the third stage (ASO, KSO and TSO), they obtain a diploma of secondary education. A pupil following a course of vocational education may obtain this certificate after a third year of specialisation in the third stage. This diploma of secondary education, in principle, forms the qualification for admission to all branches of higher education. An entrance examination is required only for the study of applied sciences at university (civil engineering).

At present, a central committee, the certification committee, is responsible for supervising pupils' certificates and diplomas. In two years time, this committee is expected to be wound up and replaced by a system whereby schools that have achieved a recognised standard on the basis of audits conducted by the inspectorate will be entitled to issue valid diplomas (see "Assessment of schools" below).

Anyone who has not completed normal secondary schooling or who wishes to follow a course of secondary level vocational training may apply to colleges of further education, where officially certified courses can be attended after work.

Table 7: Number of students attending evening classes – secondary education level (school year 1990/91)

ARGO		"Neutral"		Private		Total		
Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Total
11 388	15 352	15 528	21 986	20 478	43 430	47 394	80 951	128 345

A full diploma of secondary education may also be obtained from a central examinations board.

Flanders endeavours to integrate special secondary education in normal secondary schools have been half-hearted. Such integration is encouraged in the GON project (geïntegreerd onderwijs-project) (integrated education project), which enables disabled children to go to a normal secondary school. In exchange, the school is entitled to extra staff and material.

Nevertheless, current educational programmes for the disabled are to be found only in special schools, which offer eight types of education depending on the disability: slight mental disorders, serious mental disorders, personality disorders, physical disability, chronic illness, sight, hearing, language or speech disorders and/or learning difficulties. In addition, the pupils are grouped according to four teaching objectives: social adjustment (OV 1), occupation in a sheltered environment (OV 2), occupation in a normal working environment (OV 3) and aptitude for normal education with reservations (OV 4).

Table 8: Number of pupils in special education per type of training in 1992/93

OV 1	OV 2	OV 3	OV 4
1 758	1 919	10 117	401

5. The school as an organisation and as a community

The legal status of secondary school pupils was mentioned earlier (see "Rights of pupils and students"). It may be added that, in Flanders, the tradition of freedom of education has always resulted in much thought and attention being devoted to schooling. The greater independence given to community education has strengthened this tradition still further.

This freedom of education also implies a free choice of school. As the birth-rate falls, this forces independent schools to create a more distinctive profile for themselves, especially in out-of-class activities. Despite the absence of binding rules on the subject, most schools are making an effort in the fields of culture and sport. It should, however, be pointed out here that in Flanders a wide range of part-time artistic education covering both the fine arts and music is on offer in addition to full-time schooling. The country possesses an extensive sports infrastructure and many clubs have a positive impact on young people's leisure activities.

6. Syllabuses

Basic training

Basic training is indubitably the leitmotiv of secondary education. It is defined by decree as a set of subjects that must be studied by all young people. Arrangements for the teaching of these subjects must be approved by the Minister of Education, although schools have a wide margin of discretion in this respect.

In the first year, all pupils receive the same basic training. This means that twenty-seven hours per week must be devoted to it. In the second year, this basic core is reduced to twenty-four hours. No central standard is imposed as from the second stage. In principle, every school is free to set its own time-table, subject to ministerial approval. Nevertheless, timetables tend to converge to a very great extent because the different educational networks have worked out consolidated schedules, which have been agreed with the minister and these have been adopted by most schools.[1]

Syllabuses

The much-vaunted freedom of education inevitably has repercussions on syllabuses. In theory, each school is free to submit its syllabuses to the Minister of Education for approval. Until recently they were compared with those drawn up by the central state inspectorate of education.

1. See annexe for two examples of these consolidated schedules.

The inspectorate has not produced any syllabuses itself since September 1991. On the other hand, the approval of a school syllabus depends on a favourable opinion from this inspectorate.

Final goals

The Flemish Community intends to assure a decree on minimum teaching objectives in the fairly near future. The final goals will comprise the minimum subject matter that each school will have to try to cover. A detailed inspection embracing several subjects will make it possible to ascertain whether schools are attaining these goals. If the inspector finds to the contrary, the school could lose its approved status.

7. Assessment

Assessment of pupils' knowledge

Very few central instructions have been issued on pupil assessment. In each school, pupils must be assessed by a meeting of staff, which may advise or deliberate. At the end of every school year, a deliberative "staff meeting" must be held to decide whether a pupil can move up to the next year and what conditions might possibly be attached to this decision. Each school must have a set of rules governing studies so that pupils and their parents can see beforehand what assessment principles apply at the school. Nevertheless, there are no rules on assessment itself. No central examinations are held in our country at the end of schooling. Everyone who has successfully completed the final year is awarded the diploma of secondary education without having to pass an additional test. This diploma is the passport to all higher education courses.

Assessment of schools

On 17 July 1991, the Flemish Parliament adopted a decree stipulating that, as from September 1991, the quality of instruction was to be checked in all schools in the same way. At the same time, all schools may call on the services of external advisory bodies.

The public authorities are entitled to act on the basis of the community's minimum educational requirements, or "final goals": an independent scientific service has been set up to determine these goals – the Service for the Development of Education. The main duties of this service are to formulate final goals, devise means of assessing them and arrange for in-service training of inspectors. The inspectorate is responsible for actually carrying out the

checks, which will progress from spot checks on individual teachers, as in the past, to dynamic quality control in the form of a "school audit" conducted by a team of inspectors. A school on which the inspectorate gives a favourable verdict is automatically recognised as a school entitled to issue valid diplomas.

The possibility of calling in independent advisory services is the third aspect of this quality control drive. These services are linked to the main networks in order to safeguard the principle of freedom of education.

It is clear that, by casting the inspectorate in a new role, the public authorities have given themselves the means of measuring schools' teaching efficiency in the future.

Lastly, it should be pointed out that the inspectorate's position *vis-à-vis* the public authorities has also changed. Every year, the inspectorate must submit a report on the state of education to the Flemish Parliament. This report must provide the public authorities with a picture of the way in which legislation is being applied. It might also encourage the amendment of legislation in order to encourage better management of schools.

Quality support services – educational advisory services

Counselling is an activity closely allied with inspection. In the past, many inspectors also gave advice, as they had teaching qualifications and experience.

A recent reform has drawn a very clear dividing line between the two activities. Inspectors are responsible for checking the quality of education, whereas the educational counsellors in each network devote themselves to managing the quality of the type of education provided. As each educational network is free to develop its own educational strategy, advisory services are organised by networks. The public authorities provide them with the resources for setting up their own advisory service. The number of counsellors depends on the number of teachers per level per network. Counsellors help schools and teachers make the most of their qualities as instructors and educators.

8. The school staff: teachers, heads and auxiliary staff

Senior staff

Flemish schools are managed by head teachers. Once a school reaches a reasonable size and is therefore entitled to provide education on its own, it may have a head teacher, who no longer has to teach in the classroom. A school

with over 600 pupils also has a deputy head, who is likewise freed from teaching duties. These two posts are filled by recruitment from the teaching staff of the school itself or from other schools. There are no other particular rules governing the recruitment of head teachers.

Technical and vocational schools also have a head of workshop, who is responsible for managing the workshops. This may include contacts with trade and industry. Under general pre-existing rules, the head of workshop is assisted by one or more foremen.

Apart from these senior positions, there are no particular duties corresponding to a post in middle management. As schools are free to organise the time allotted to them, some teachers may be given duties outside the classroom. For example, most secondary schools have stage co-ordinators: teachers who are exempted from six or more hours of teaching and who are responsible for co-ordinating and organising studies at a given stage. For the practical organisation of school life, the head may count on auxiliary teaching and administrative staff whose numbers are linked to the number of pupils enrolled. A school is always entitled to a bursar. If the head has no secretary, the bursar also acts as school secretary. Above a certain number of pupils, a school may employ a head teacher's secretary with senior secretarial duties and who, more specifically, keeps staff and pupil records. The apportionment of duties among the other members of the auxiliary teaching staff is a matter for the school itself. In general, this category of staff undertakes administrative and supervisory duties. The administrative staff carries out administrative work.

Teachers

For some time now questions have been asked about teacher training in the Flemish Community.[1] Growing criticism is being voiced of all types of training (that of university lecturers, secondary and primary school teachers). The general complaint is that not enough general and pedagogic training is available. University courses for teachers do not provide enough practical teaching instruction, and teacher training colleges do not study subject matter in sufficient depth. Some far-reaching changes in teacher training may therefore be expected in the next few years. To this end, higher education must be

1. The training of teachers for secondary education is carried out on two levels: stage one teachers have followed a course of teacher training in higher pedagogical education (*regendat* – three years' duration); they obtain a diploma for lower secondary school teaching (*régent*); university graduates can carry on their training to become teachers in higher secondary education (one year's duration either concurrently or consequentively with their degree). Graduate teachers give lessons in the third stage. In the second stage, schools are free to choose: either *régents* give the lessons or they are given by graduate teachers.

reorganised by expanding the non-university sector. Regulations laid down by decree apply to all teachers in Flanders. They include priority rules on entry into the profession. After a specified length of service, a teacher may be appointed permanently to a vacant post. Thereafter, the public authorities are bound to find a new job for any teacher losing their post at the first school. Security of employment and salary is a crucial aspect of personnel management. Although the provider makes the final appointment, the public authorities confirm it and guarantee security of employment. The public authorities have introduced a redeployment procedure to cope with the problem of established teachers who have no work in "their" school (closure or fewer pupils).

Teachers' pay has scarcely changed over the years. This obviously means that they have lost out financially compared with most other professions. In 1990, as the public authorities were aware of the problem, they entered into a collective agreement providing for higher salaries for certain categories of teachers (nursery-school teachers). In addition, salaries have generally been raised by 6% over three years. When all is said and done, this increase is fairly insignificant compared to the rise in the cost of living. On the other hand, like all wages in Belgium, teachers' salaries are automatically adjusted to the cost of living, as measured by means of a special price index. A fresh round of pay talks may therefore be expected in 1993. Nevertheless, the Flemish Community (like the French Community) is desperately short of resources, as the federal government's grant to regional authorities is inadequate. A considerable pay rise will probably be possible only when the public authorities have managed to curb the education budget. In order to do so, a reduction in the number of teachers and an enlargement of secondary schools has been proposed (fewer but bigger schools, closer collaboration between them and fewer options).

9. The European dimension

Flanders, the crossroads of Europe with Brussels as it capital, has been trying to give a European dimension to its secondary education for a long time. This aim has influenced history curricula and is most strongly reflected in the teaching of languages: every young Fleming (apart from pupils receiving vocational education) learns two or even three foreign languages (French, English and German) at secondary level. German is sometimes replaced by Spanish or Italian.

The concern to give secondary education a European slant is also mirrored in numerous exchange schemes. More and more schools are seeking a partner in another European country (the Czech Republic is a recent example). Euro-

Table 9: Monthly salaries in secondary education (as at 1 October 1992)

	Gross monthly salary in Belgian francs
Régent	
starting salary	58 080
after twenty-five years	99 866
Graduate teacher	
starting salary	73 413
after twenty-five years	131 485
Head teacher	
starting salary	97 324
after twenty-five years	157 620

pean Union projects (Lingua, Tempus, Arion, etc.) are meeting with growing success. It may therefore be said that Flemish secondary education is striving to give Europe the emphasis it deserves.

III. Efficiency and performance of secondary education

Table 10: Pupil numbers in the various types of secondary schooling (1980, 1985 and 1990)

Type	1980	%	1985	%	1990	%
First stage	[1]		[1]		144 719	33.9
General	235 287	48.2	244 841	52.1	115 026	26.9
Artistic	1 617	0.3	953	0.2	929	0.2
Technical	151 974	31.1	121 259	25.8	86 485	20.2
Vocational	98 557	20.2	102 299	21.7	79 166	18.5

1. The unitary structure was introduced in 1989/90. Since then, division into categories starts as from the second stage. This explains the large drop in technical schooling: pupils prefer to begin their studies in a school with second and third general stages. They stay there if possible.

1. Some particulars of failure at school

Little research has been done in this field. The Department of Education of the Flemish Community has been gathering statistics about backwardness at school for several years. The table below provides an overview. Nevertheless, it refers only to backwardness compared with the reference year (the base being date of birth). Any underachievement before secondary education (kindergarten or primary school) or for other reasons (for example, health) swells these figures. The increase in poor performance at school between 1977 and 1986 can probably be explained by the raising of the school-leaving age. A group of young people who previously disappeared from the statistics had to stay on at school.

Table 11: Percentage of pupils' backwardness

	1977/78		1987/88		1990/91	
Year	% backward	Increase per annum	% backward	Increase per annum	% backward	Increase per annum
First	17.82		21.58		19.54	
Second	22.84	5.02	27.84	6.26	25.10	5.56
Third	29.81	6.97	35.23	7.39	31.67	6.57
Fourth	36.23	6.42	41.42	6.19	38.55	6.88
Fifth	35.99	- 0.24	43.95	2.53	42.89	4.34
Sixth	34.64	-1.35	40.06	-3.89	40.73	-2.16

2. Data on youth unemployment

The following table shows job-seekers classified according to sex. These are persons who have officially registered as unemployed after leaving school. School-leavers who have to do military service are not included in the table.

Table 12: Number of job seekers per sex

	1985	1986	1989	1990	1991
Men	29 631	9 186	17 922	17 969	19 465
Women	29 262	27 689	28 177	27 384	25 806

The following table shows the number of young people who have left school and who are still looking for a job on 31 May of the following year.

Table 13: Number of job seekers per sex who have left school

	1985	1986	1989	1990	1991
Men	7 068	3 263	1 479	2 401	3 001
Women	6 406	6 216	3 561	4 427	4 729

If these figures are broken down according to type of education, we obtain a table showing the relationship between education and the likelihood of becoming unemployed.

Table 14: Job seekers according to their educational level (percentage)

Type	Men	Women
Primary education	29%	42.8%
General lower secondary education	21.3%	29.5%
Technical lower secondary education	17%	29.1%
Vocational lower secondary education	22.2%	37.5%
General higher secondary education	23.6%	22.4%
Technical higher secondary education	12.5%	19.3%
Vocational higher secondary education	11%	19.9%

IV. Challenges, problems and outlook

Over the last twenty years, secondary education has had to meet the challenge of creating a system in tune with democratisation. More and more young people have gone on to secondary education. The raising of the school-leaving age was the logical political response to this trend. The intention was to offer as many opportunities as possible in this secondary education to the largest possible number of pupils. It was then necessary to prevent social background determining the choice of school. In order to find an answer to these two challenges two educational models were compared with one another: comprehensive versus differentiated schooling.

In 1989, the introduction of the unitary structure ended the debate. The freedom accorded to each school to work out an educational strategy best suited to its public should ultimately lead to a clearer sense of direction. The measures to promote schools' independence in the fields of management and participation should contribute to this. In the immediate future, this development presupposes closer collaboration between schools offering different courses. Individuals ought to be able to find their way more easily in their educational system. This also means that a closer watch will have to be kept on pupils' psychological and social development and that they will need more guidance in their choice of studies.

The Flemish Community is looking for solutions to all these problems. The future will show how it sets about meeting these new challenges.

Bibliography

Beleidsnota. Departement Onderwijs, January 1992.

Education in Belgium: The Diverging Paths, OECD, 1991.

Evolutie van de loon- en werkingskost per leerling/student, per net en per niveau, periode 1981-90, Vlaams Ministerie van Onderwijs, Secretariaat-generaal, February 1990.

Le mouvement éducatif en Communauté flamande de Belgique, Ministerie van de Vlaamse Gemeenschap, Departement Onderwijs, Brussels, 1990.

Reviews of National Policies for Education, Belgium, OECD, 1993.

Statistisch jaarboek van het onderwijs. Schooljaar 1988-89, Ministerie van Onderwijs, Brussels.

Beperkte Statistische Telling 1992, Ministerie van de Vlaamse Gemeenschap, Departement Onderwijs, Administratie Algemene onderwijsdiensten en voorlichting, Bestuur Statistiek.

M. Eloy, *"De kostprijs van het onderwijs in België"* and J. van Damme, *"Schoolse vertraging en zittenblijven: frequentie, betekenis en beleving door de leerling"*, in *Tijdschrift voor Onderwijsrecht en onderwijsbeleid 1992-93*, No. 2, November-December 1992, pp. 88-119.

Annexe – Examples of consolidated schedules

First stage – first year "A"

Basic training	Number of hours (minimum)
Religion or non-denominational ethics	2
Geography	1
Biology	1
French	4
History	1
Physical education	2
Music	1
Dutch	4
Art	1
Mathematics	4
Technology	1
Sub-total	23[1] (27)
At the discretion of the school one or several recognised subjects (for example, Latin)	5
Total	32

1. Schools choose which subjects they want to give more weight to by allocating them more than the compulsory minimum number of hours so as to arrive at a total of twenty-seven hours for basic training.

First stage – second year

Subjects	Number of hours (minimum)
Basic training	
Religion or non-denominational ethics	2
Geography	1
Biology	1
English	2
French	3
History	1
Physical education	2
Music	–
Dutch	4
Art	–
Mathematics	4
Technology	1
Sub-total	21[1] (24)
Options (a few examples):	5
Agro-biotechnology	
– agricultural techniques	2
– practical exercises	2
Sub-total	4
Greek – Latin	
– Greek	2
– Latin	3
Sub-total	5
Modern sciences	
– geography	
– economics	2
– expression	
– art	2
– typing or another general subject	
At the discretion of the school (maximum)	3
Total (maximum)[2]	32/34

1. Schools choose which subjects they want to give more weight to by allocating them more than the compulsory minimum number of hours so as to arrive at a total of twenty-seven hours for basic training.
2. A maximum of thirty-four hours is allowed if there are at least four hours of practical lessons.

Sales agents for publications of the Council of Europe
Agents de vente des publications du Conseil de l'Europe

AUSTRALIA/AUSTRALIE
Hunter Publications, 58A, Gipps Street
AUS-3066 COLLINGWOOD, Victoria

AUSTRIA/AUTRICHE
Gerold und Co., Graben 31
A-1011 WIEN 1

BELGIUM/BELGIQUE
La Librairie européenne SA
50, avenue A. Jonnart
B-1200 BRUXELLES 20

Jean de Lannoy
202, avenue du Roi
B-1060 BRUXELLES

CANADA
Renouf Publishing Company Limited
1294 Algoma Road
CDN-OTTAWA ONT K1B 3W8

CYPRUS/CHYPRE
MAM
The House of the Cyprus Book
PO Box 1722, CY-NICOSIA

DENMARK/DANEMARK
Munksgaard
Book and Subscription Service
PO Box 2148
DK-1016 KØBENHAVN K

FINLAND/FINLANDE
Akateeminen Kirjakauppa
Keskuskatu 1, PO Box 218
SF-00381 HELSINKI

GERMANY/ALLEMAGNE
UNO Verlag
Poppelsdorfer Allee 55
D-53115 BONN

GREECE/GRÈCE
Librairie Kauffmann
Mavrokordatou 9, GR-ATHINAI 106 78

IRELAND/IRLANDE
Government Stationery Office
Publications Section
4-5 Harcourt Road, IRL-DUBLIN 2

ISRAEL/ISRAËL
ROY International
PO Box 13056
IL-61130 TEL AVIV

ITALY/ITALIE
Librería Commissionaria Sansoni
Via Duca di Calabria, 1/1
Casella Postale 552, I-50125 FIRENZE

LUXEMBOURG
Librairie Bourbon
(Imprimerie Saint-Paul)
11, rue Bourbon
L-1249 LUXEMBOURG

NETHERLANDS/PAYS-BAS
InOr-publikaties, PO Box 202
NL-7480 AE HAAKSBERGEN

NORWAY/NORVÈGE
Akademika, A/S Universitetsbokhandel
PO Box 84, Blindern
N-0314 OSLO

PORTUGAL
Livraria Portugal, Rua do Carmo, 70
P-1200 LISBOA

SPAIN/ ESPAGNE
Mundi-Prensa Libros SA
Castelló 37, E-28001 MADRID

Llibreria de la Generalitat
Rambla dels Estudis, 118
E-08002 BARCELONA

Llibreria de la Generalitat de Catalunya
Gran Via Jaume I, 38, E-17001 GIRONA

SWEDEN/SUÈDE
Aktiebolaget CE Fritzes
Regeringsgatan 12, Box 163 56
S-10327 STOCKHOLM

SWITZERLAND/SUISSE
Buchhandlung Heinimann & Co
Kirchgasse 17, CH-8001 ZÜRICH

BERSY
Route du Manège 60
CP 4040
CH-1950 SION 4

TURKEY/TURQUIE
Yab-Yay Yayımcılık Sanayi Dagıtım Tic Ltd
Barbaros Bulvari 61 Kat 3 Daire 3
Besiktas, TR-ISTANBUL

UNITED KINGDOM/ROYAUME-UNI
HMSO, Agency Section
51 Nine Elms Lane
GB-LONDON SW8 5DR

UNITED STATES and CANADA/
ÉTATS-UNIS et CANADA
Manhattan Publishing Company
468 Albany Post Road
PO Box 850
CROTON-ON-HUDSON, NY 10520

STRASBOURG
Librairie internationale Kléber
1, rue des Francs-Bourgeois
F-67000 STRASBOURG

Librairie des Facultés
2-12, rue de Rome
F-67000 STRASBOURG

Librairie Kléber
Palais de l'Europe
F-67075 STRASBOURG Cedex

Council of Europe Press/Les éditions du Conseil de l'Europe
Council of Europe/Conseil de l'Europe
F-67075 Strasbourg Cedex

This publication contains a brief description of secondary education in the Flemish Community of Belgium.

It constitutes one part of a series entitled "Guide to secondary education in Europe" developed as part of the project "A secondary education for Europe".

The aim of this series is to make accessible to the public not only a systematic and coherent exposition of the educational systems and traditions in all signatory states to the European Cultural Convention, but also to outline the essential problems these systems are facing at the present time.

Each book has been written by an expert from the country concerned on the basis of a questionnaire. The questionnaire was drawn up by Denis Kallen who has both co-ordinated the series and undertaken the editing of each text in collaboration with the author.

Given that this is an area in which changes take place particularly quickly and that the translation, revision and publication of the manuscript require a certain amount of time, there will be an opportunity to publish updated information for the Final Conference of the project in 1996.

Council of Europe Press

ISBN 92-871-2643-7